

Final cleanup of former McAdoo toxic waste site slated

By Bill Savitsky Jr.

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McADOO — Final cleanup of the former McAdoo Associates hazardous waste site near here is expected to begin by late summer, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency spokesman says.

Superfund Public Information Specialist Nanci Sinclair also said negotiations are under way to fund cleanup of the former C&D recycling plant hazardous waste site in nearby Foster Twp., Luzerne County.

The former McAdoo Associates site in Schuylkill County, along Route 309 between McAdoo

and Hazleton, has been ranked 26th on the EPA Superfund list of the worst hazardous waste sites in the nation.

McAdoo Associates operated a metal-recycling business at the site from 1975 to 1978 and a solid-waste dump there in 1978 and 1979, Sinclair said. Both operations were shut down by the state Department of Environmental Resources in 1979 for non-compliance with environmental laws, she said.

A cleanup by the EPA in 1982 removed 6,790 55-gallon drums of waste and six storage tanks that held from 10,000 to 15,000 gallons of waste each. Hazardous chemi-

cals found at the site included methylene chloride, toluene acetone, phalates and several toxic metals. The area has been fenced off since 1980, Sinclair said.

Final cleanup at the site will involve removal of contaminated topsoil, draining and removal of a large storage tank that contains sludges and removal of any remaining storage drums or other surface debris, Sinclair said.

A steering committee that represents 65 of the 86 parties deemed responsible for the waste has verbally agreed to finance the cleanup, Sinclair said, and the EPA is awaiting a signed consent order

confirming the agreement.

If the responsible parties do not submit the order by the end of June, the EPA will begin work using Superfund money, according to Sinclair. A lawsuit then would be filed by the EPA to collect damages from the non-consenting responsible parties, she said.

The responsible parties include any present or former owners of the site, industries that generated waste deposited there and haulers that transported the waste.

The EPA has known since 1984 what work was needed at the site, and it has been trying to arrange financing for the cleanup since then, Sinclair said. The project was

delayed when the federal Superfund bill expired in 1985 and was not reauthorized until 1986, she said.

"This final cleanup is taking a lot longer than we expected," she said. "Work will definitely begin by the end of August."

Meanwhile, preliminary work is progressing at the Foster Twp. site, although no cleanup is expected there soon, said Sinclair.

The EPA is conducting tests to determine levels of contamination and is negotiating with the responsible parties to pay for the cleanup.

The site of the former C&D recycling plant, which reclaimed copper from used wire, is contaminat-

ed with hazardous levels of toluene, xylene, benzene, arsenic and lead, according to DER tests.

The EPA is negotiating with three parties deemed responsible for contaminating the site, Sinclair said. They are the C&D owners, Joseph and Myron Brenner; Eastern Diversified Metals of St. Louis; and AT&T Metals of South Carolina.

A feasibility study and long-range plans for the site will be drawn up when financing is obtained, according to Sinclair. The site also has been proposed for the EPA Superfund list, but has not been assigned a ranking, she said.

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